

Illinois State Museum  
OF  
NATURAL HISTORY  
SPRINGFIELD, ILL.





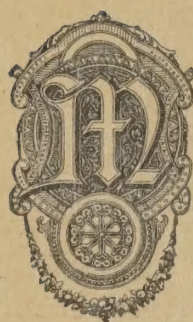


CAHOKIA, OR "MONK'S MOUND," MADISON COUNTY, ILL.



# ANTIQUITIES OF MONKS' MOUND.

By  
William McAdams.  
1883



ADISON COUNTY is rich in antiquities. Its central geographical position, and its peculiar geological formation, in ancient times, as well as now, made it a great centre of natural resources, and the ancient population had their great central works in this locality. The greatest mounds in the United States are here, and it is really the Egypt of America with its pyramids and tumuli looming up from the rich valley of the Mississippi in magnitude and grandeur, rivaling in interest those of the Nile.

Within the ten miles square of alluvial bottom in this county are more than one hundred mounds of considerable dimensions. The largest of these mounds are on the bank of the Cahokia creek five or six miles from East St. Louis. This group contains seventy-two mounds, the majority of which are situated on a square mile. The largest mound is in the centre of the group and is known as the Cahokia or Monks' Mound, deriving its latter name from the fact that in the early history of the county some of the order of La Trappe settled near and for a time occupied the mound. These monks lived in strict and silent seclusion, eat no meat and lived upon the most frugal and homely diet. Several of them soon succumbed to the malarial influences of the climate, and the remainder of the colony departed for whence they came.

In this connection we prefer the name of Cahokia Mound since it perpetuates the name of a tribe of Indians met by La Salle in this vicinity, who gave their name to the creek.

The form of the Cahokia Mound is a parallelogram, with straight sides, the longer of which are north and south. It is about one hundred feet in height.

On the southern end, some 30 feet above the base, is a terrace or apron, containing near two acres of ground.

On the western side, and some thirty feet above the first terrace, is a second one of somewhat less extent.

Pub. By W. M. Brink  
Edwardsville, Ill.

173146 Vince Golder, 1995/RBY



The top of the mound is flat and divided into two parts, the northern end being some 4 or 5 feet higher than the southern portion. The summit contains about an acre and a half.

Near the middle of the first terrace, at the base of the mound, is a projecting point, apparently the remains of a graded pathway to ascend from the plain to the terrace. The west side of the mound below the second terrace is very irregular, and forms projecting knobs, separated by deep ravines, probably the result of rain-storms; to the northwest corner of the base of the structure there seems to be a small mound attached, in exact imitation of the small mounds attached to the base of the pyramids of Egypt as well as those of Mexico.

The remaining sides of the structure are quite straight and but little defaced by the hand of time.

About the sides of the mound are still growing several forest trees, one of which is an elm several centuries old.

As the size of the Cahokia Mound has been given variously we applied to Mr. B. J. Vancourt, a practical surveyor living in the vicinity, at O'Fallen, and whom we knew had made a regular survey of the mound. Mr. Vancourt sent us the following:

"In my survey I did not follow the irregularities of the mound, but made straight lines enclosing the base. The largest axis is from north to south and is 998 feet, the shortest from east to west is 721 feet. The height of the mound is 99 feet. The base of the structure covers 16 acres, 2 roods and 3 perches of ground."

Our own survey made the base somewhat less than sixteen acres in extent, it being somewhat difficult to point out the precise line where the structure begins to rise from the plain.

The base of the Cahokia pyramid covers more ground than any pyramid of Egypt, and with the exception of Cholula, which is, however, simply a mass of ruins, the Cahokia is the largest in the world.

The great pyramid of Egypt—Cheops, is 746 feet square. The temple of Mexico was 680 feet square.

The summit and lower terrace of the Cahokia Mound has been plowed a few times. Brackenridge who visited the mound in 1811, says that the monks used the lower terrace for a kitchen garden, and also had the summit of the structure sown in wheat. The great pyramid has not been materially changed, however, and doubtless presents the same outlines to-day as at the time of the discovery of this continent by Columbus.

Since some doubts have been expressed as to the artificial origin of this structure we were much interested to ascertain what could be learned in this respect by examination. On the top of the pyramid are the remains of a house, said to have been commenced by the monks, but afterwards added to and finished as a comfortable residence for the family of a man named Hill, an enterprising settler who owned the mound and a large body of land adjoin-



ing. Beneath this house is a deep unwallled cellar. A section down the side of the cellar to the depth of ten feet is very plainly revealed a deposit of various kinds of earth without stratification. The principal part of this deposit was the black humus or mould, so common in the bottom and forming the principal soil, very sticky when wet and breaking into cubical blocks when dry. Here and there, as if thrown promiscuously among the black mould, is a bunch of yellow clay, or sand, or marly loess, these bunches being about such size as a man could easily carry.

Similar sections can be seen up the old road made by Hill to ascend to his residence.

On the second terrace is a well (shown in the engraving dug by Hill), and supposed to be 80 or 90 feet deep, penetrating the base of the mound. The water taken out while excavating for the well still lies near, and would indicate that the deposits penetrated were similar to those seen in the cellar. Old settlers living near where the well was dug, say that at the depth of about sixty feet pieces of pottery and two sea shells were found. soil?

In an old publication entitled the "Far West" published in New York, by Harper & Bros., in 1838, the author after describing the great mound which he visited, also speaks of the well and says that while it was being dug, at the depth of sixty feet remains of corn and fragments of pottery were found. On drinking of the water he says it had a peculiar taste. He further mentions that it was but seldom used on account of the general belief among the inhabitants that the well was dug through an ancient cemetery beneath the mound.

About midway, on the north side, or face of the pyramid, and elevated 25 or 30 feet above the base, in a small depression, stands a pine tree, singularly enough, since this tree is not found in the forests in this locality. There was a story rife among the early settlers that this tree stood at the mouth of an opening or gallery into the interior of the mounds. To ascertain the truth of this matter, Mr. Thomas Ramey, the present owner of the mound, commenced a tunnel at this tree and excavated about ninety (90) feet towards the centre of the mound. When fifteen feet from the entrance to the tunnel a piece of lead ore was discovered, but no other object of interest was found. The deposits penetrated by the tunnel are very plainly shown to be the same as seen in the cellar mentioned above.

Upon approaching the Cahokia temple, which stands on a level plain, two miles from the bluff and five miles from Mississippi river, one is astonished at its magnitude and the large force of men, time and labor required in its construction; but the astonishment of the beholder is increased upon coming near, to find that the great mound is but one of many structures, which, if not so large, are still of immense proportions.

About the great mound and lying in apparent irregular form over the plain are some seventy others, some square, some conical, others oblong. Several of the group are on the opposite side of the Cahokia creek. The situation of the mounds is shown by the map and diagrams on another page. The nearest mound on both the east and west side of the



greater structure, is square, with their sides and corners, like the greater pyramid, straight and well-defined. The square on the east side is about 15 feet in height with between one and two acres on the summit. The square on the west side is very much larger, and something over 20 feet in height.

The largest square is southwest of the great mound, some 300 paces distant and 30 feet in height. The summit of this square platform is so large that it contains a good-sized farm house with all the outbuildings, barn-yards and gardens necessary to a well-regulated farm.

One peculiarity of these square mounds, of which there are a number in the group, are that they are all attended by a small conical mound which is, in some instances, attached to one corner. This same peculiarity, as described by travelers, is observed in Egypt as well as Mexico, the pyramids being attended by a small mound attached generally to one corner.

Some of the oval mounds are very large, being from ten to sixty feet in height. One large oval mound stands directly on the bank of the Cahokia, (see Map) and the side of the mound toward the creek is so washed away as to give an excellent opportunity to examine the material and manner of its construction. It is composed of black loam nothing different from the great pyramid. Many of the mounds, both conical and oval, have such declivity that one can with difficulty ascend the sides.

There are many other mounds in the bottom not enumerated in the Cahokia group. There is another very interesting group near Mitchell station, on the C. A. & St. L. R. R., between St. Louis & Alton. Several of this group present the same square flat forms, as described on the Cahokia.

One of these platforms, measuring one hundred paces, or 300 feet on each of its four sides and 25 or 30 feet high, has been largely excavated to make room for railroad tracks. A portion of the earth near the centre still remains showing the bunches of earth thrown down promiscuously during the construction of the mound.

During the excavation for the four R. R. tracks that go through this mound a great number of relics were found, showing that these ancient temples were used for sepulchres as well as for other purposes. From this mound we have a considerable number of copper implements and ornaments; some of the latter are curiously made to represent the shell of a tortoise, even showing the sutures in the plates of the shell. Short, heavy spools of bone covered with copper so neatly done, that only from a broken one did we discover that the interior was bone. Copper awls and needles, some of the latter 18 inches in length. There were also flint implements and the teeth of a buffalo, together with a quantity of both coarse and fine matting plaited together in a neat manner.

Who were the people who erected these great mounds on the American Bottom? If these works were erected by the ancestors of our present red Indians, then the Indians must





CAHOKIA MOUNDS MADISON, CO. ILLINOIS.  
 \* Figures on Mounds denote height in feet.







have very greatly degenerated, for we are quite satisfied that the mound builder had a different government, a different religion, a different character, and most probably a different physiognomy. Our knowledge of Indian character, formed largely by personal contact with them in the west, has led us to believe that our Indians, like the Arabs of the desert are incapable of any great work requiring physical labor.

Still it would seem as if the Indians had some connection with the ancient mound-builders. Possibly the Indians of the present are descended in some way from the mound-builders, because mound-building seems to have been common to all savage people.

Even if our Indians were known to have made mounds, which is highly probable, it would not prove they were descended from the people who built the great mounds on the Cahokia.

Mounds are found everywhere; Europe, Asia, and Africa present almost precisely such mounds as we have in Illinois. It is probable that our Indians have been known to make a few small mounds; at least we have such authority as Catlin on the Upper Mississippi, and Missouri, and the early explorers among the southern Indians. But the custom, if ever common with them, soon became obsolete after the advent of white men.

There are many small mounds on the bluffs and highlands of Madison and adjoining counties, some of which, judging from the preservation of the remains, are not very old.

Traces of sepulchres are often found in the mounds, and there is no doubt but that the later Indians used them as burial places.

The bluffs of Madison county are, in fact, an immense cemetery, and one can hardly dig on any prominence without encountering human bones. A majority of these places have no mound over them, but have been the common burial places of the tribes who, from time to time, successively inhabited the locality.

Mounds were probably only erected over the remains of persons of note. Neither are all mounds burial places. In Madison county, on the Piasa and other streams, are many mounds that seem to be the remains of dwelling-places, of which the prominent material seems to have been clay, probably the roof as well as the sides. In these mounds only what seems to be the kitchen refuse is found.

Other mounds, like some of those in the American Bottom, were erected for religious purposes, public ceremonies and meetings.

Some of these mounds are doubtless very old, others are comparatively recent, while both have intrusive burials, and much error has been promulgated by casual examination and hasty conclusion. A leading theorist on this subject in Illinois exhibits a well preserved brass button, with the well known letters U. S. upon it, said to have been found in a mound. And learned archæologists from the Smithsonian base their theories on some glass heads said to have been found in a mound in the west.



In the vicinity of the Piasa creek, which empties into the Mississippi a few miles above Alton, a great variety of mounds can still be seen, some of earth covered with stone, others of stone and earth together, while others are wholly of earth.

On the face of the bluff in this vicinity can also be seen a number of figures of animals and other objects painted with a red pigment. These figures are supposed to have some hieroglyphic meaning. At Alton was another large figure representing a kind of dragon, known as the Piasa. This monster is represented as having wings, and there is a legend said to have been held by the Indians of this vicinity that this flying dragon once actually existed, and was addicted to carrying off members of the tribe to his eyrie among the rocks and devouring the body at its leisure. Some celebrated chief dedicating himself to the work finally killed the monster, and the picture was painted on the rock in commemoration of the occasion.

The legend was written by Mr. John Russel, at one time a Baptist minister, and editor of a local paper called the "Backwoodsman." The story of the Piasa Bird, although largely imaginative, had an extensive circulation.

The painting on the rock was also described by Marquette, years ago, however; the rocks forming the face of the bluff on which the object was portrayed were quarried off for the purpose of making lime.

Although the mounds of the American Bottom seem to belong to the same age as the great earthworks of Ohio, and were probably made by the same people, there are, however, no enclosures or embankments. The nearest enclosure by earthen walls that we have been able to discover is at the mouth of the Illinois river. There is here an earthen embankment, circular in form, and nearly a mile in extent. A gateway protected by mounds opens on the high bank of a slough some distance from the Mississippi, but without a doubt its shore in ancient times. In the centre of the enclosure stands a flat circular mound; it is hardly a work of defense; for the bluff towers above it a short distance away, and within easy bowshot.

After many days' exploration and study of the Cahokia mounds we are inclined to believe the evidence would tend to prove that this group of the greatest mounds in the Union, and possibly on the continent, had their origin for religious purposes, and this was the Mecca, or grand sacred shrine of the mound builder's empire. From the flat summit of the temple, one hundred feet above the plain, were their adoritories, probably two buildings like that of Mexico, glittering with barbaric splendor, and from whence could be seen from afar the smoke and flames of the eternal fire, their emblem of the sun. At the city of Mexico the Spaniards found the Aztecs holding their religious ceremonies on almost precisely such a structure, 120 feet in height, with five terraces. On the flat summit of this pyramidal structure, which, like Cahokia, was divided into two parts, were two adoritories



or shrines, in one of which the sacred fire burned. This great Mexican temple mound was not more than half the size of the Cahokia temple, being only 300 feet square at the base. The square mounds about the base of Cahokia, some of which are larger than the base of the Mexican temple, were doubtless used for sacred purposes, and the adjoining mounds may have been the residences of the priests; just such mounds surrounded the Aztec temple. "Surrounding the great Pyramid," says Clavigero, speaking of the Aztec or Mexican temple, "were forty similar structures of smaller size, consecrated to separate divinities; one was called the House of Mirrors, and was covered with brilliant materials, and was sacred to the god of light, the soul of the world, the spiritual sun; another to the god of water; another to the god of air; and Gomera says, 'that because the winds go round the heavens they made this temple circular.'

Besides these were the dwellings of the priests, amounting to 5000 according to Zarata, and of the attendants in the temples, and places for the instruction of the youth, and if some accounts are to be credited, places for the reception of strangers who came to visit the temple and see the glory of the Court of Montezuma. There were ponds and fountains, groves and gardens, in which flowers and sweet smelling herbs were cultivated for use in certain sacred rites, and for the decoration of the temple."

There is a general concurrence in the accounts of the great temple of Mexico given by the early writers, among whom were Cortez, Bernal Diaz, and others who witnessed what they described. These accounts give us, not only some idea of the predominance of religious superstitions in Mexico, but also a good clue to the customs of our own mound builders, and the origin and uses of the great structures on the Cahokia creek.

While the Cahokia temple mound is much the same shape as the Mexican temple, it is twice as large, and the surrounding temples and mounds much larger and greater in number, leading us to believe that on the banks of the Cahokia was the largest congregation of religious structures, not only on this continent, but of the world.

What a city! What a population there must have been at that time on this alluvial plain! This view is also strongly evidenced by the fact that this rich plain, which is some 75 miles long, and 5 to 10 miles wide, is a veritable cemetery of the past, and full of evidences of long human occupation. Relics of the stone age protrude from the bank of every creek and ravine. In the rich fields opposite St. Louis and for miles up the Cahokia creek, we have many times seen the market gardener literally plow through human bones. The little labor with which enormous crops are grown here would excite the envy of the plodding planter on the banks of the Nile.

Some eminently travelled writer, after admitting that Nature stands revealed on a grand scale in America, complains that this new world is wanting in antiquities so full of interest in the old world. This writer ought to come to Cahokia, and standing on our



Cheops, look down on the monuments of pre-historic America. When he asked who built them, the echoes of his inquiring voice would go reverberating among the temples below, but no answer would return.

Of course many relics of the past are collected in the vicinity of these mounds, and from the mounds themselves. We have many thousand of these, of stone, copper, bone and shell, as well as various kinds of pottery. We are constantly surprised in looking over our collection to see the great similarity of our relics of the stone age, with those of other countries. "Evan's Stone Age of Great Britain" might represent ours fairly by a simple change of title and still be an incomparable work.

There is hardly an antiquity in any country but what we have represented here, and the remarkable similarity of some of the more peculiar is very puzzling, especially since we have been in the habit of attributing this similarity of thought to the instinctive impulses of savage and barbarian untutored minds. We are so puzzled sometimes as to doubt our position. This is illustrated in the fact that after having taken from the mounds a number of large sea shells, found in such a position and under such circumstances as to leave no doubt as to their being held sacred by the mound builders, and used in their religious ceremonies, to find that they were, in a great majority, the same reversed shell, with the mouth or opening on the left-hand side, and held as sacred by the *Buddhists of India*. We are told that the statues of Buddha are often seen, in which each toe of his foot is represented by a sinistral or reversed conch shell. From time immemorial these shells turning the wrong way have been reversed in Asia, and wherever the Buddhist religion is known, they have numbers of *Pyrrula*, *Cassis*, *Conchs* and other shells taken from the altars of the mounds, and exhibiting the same reversed whorls. It is a strange fact that the great mounds of Cahokia should, like those of Egypt and Mexico, stand straight with the main points of the compass.

It is a singular fact that the mound-builder should have the same religious ceremonies. At the foot of the Cahokia temple we were so fortunate as to discover a sort of tomb or burial place in size less than two rods square; amid the crumbling dust of near a score of human skeletons, we found about a hundred vessels of pottery in an almost perfect condition. It is surprising to observe how these vases and long-necked water bottles resembled in appearance and shape the ancient vessels of the Nile, but what is more strange is that several of these vessels have painted on them in bright red pigment some of the same symbols as used by the sun-worshippers in Egypt, and very similar to symbols on similar vessels taken by Schliemann from buried Mycenæ and Troy. (See illustrations).

The limits of this paper permit us only to mention the very interesting fact that in connection with the mounds many symbols are found remarkably resembling those of the institution of Masonry. Squares, triangles, circles and circles touching parallel lines are not





PLATE 1.









Platige

P. Outchout

Platige

PLATE 2.







uncommon in the shape of the mounds and earthworks, plummets, crosses of various kinds, painted and carved on earthen vessels, and we have curious boat-shaped stone implements that we are inclined to believe were used as spirit levels. A series of illustrations would be necessary to explain these to the public. Some of the ceremonies of the mound-builders also appear strongly similar to those used in Masonry. It may be that Masonry is descended from the original and primitive religion of mankind. From what centre the civilization of man came we know not.

## DESCRIPTION OF PLATE NO. 1.

1. Long-necked water vessel, of which numerous examples are found in the American Bottom.

2. Earthen vessel representing the beaver.

3. This vessel, as well as the preceding ones, are burned hard and painted red. All one-fourth original size.

4. 5. Earthen dishes. These fine vessels are represented one-eighth natural size.

6. Sea shell, *Busycon perversum*, an uncut specimen one-fourth natural size.

7. 10. Fine water vessels representing the human form one-quarter natural size.

8. Neat vessel with two human faces, one on the rim one-eighth natural size.

9. Vessel representing bear one-quarter natural size.

11. Recumbent human figure with the neck of the vessel arising from middle of body, one-fifth natural size. 12. Like No. 11, a unique water vessel, one-fifth natural size.

13, 14, 15. Fine earthen vessels one-half natural size, on which are carefully painted certain figures that probably refer to their religion. Although we have found many painted vessels and somewhat similar figures in Madison county, we have thought best to copy a few illustrations from the reports of the St. Louis Academy of Science.

The originals of the figures from 11 to 15 inclusive, were found on the Missouri side of the Mississippi below St. Louis, and are now in the collections of the Academy of Major Hilder of St. Louis. The remainder of the objects figured on Plate 1, as well as Plate 2, are in my own collection, and were obtained from Madison county.

## DESCRIPTION OF PLATE NO. 2.

1, 2, 3, 4. Finely made vessels of burned clay, probably representing ducks. The illustrations explain themselves better than a description.

5. Water vessels that, with the preceding and near a hundred others, were found in an ancient burial place at the foot of the great Cahokia Mound.



6. Copper from the mounds. The figure on the right is a copper axe, the next a crescent head ornament, beneath which is a copper bracelet and ornamental tube. To the left of the copper crescent is a spear point, a plummet and a smaller axe, all of beaten native copper.

7. On the left is a polished flint axe, a rare and beautiful implement, as also is the diorite axe on the right. They are perfectly smooth, the marks in chipping and manufacture being ground away, then polished. This is not the common form of the stone weapon so commonly seen, but exactly represents the form of European ground flint-axes, and is rarely found in this country. Both of these are from mounds in Jersey county. We have two similar ones from Madison, but they are broken.

8. Two skulls found with the pottery at the foot of the great Cahokia Mound. The one on the right is a common form of the crania with the pottery. The one on the left is not uncommon, and may be the result of artificial flattening, although the appearance of the rounded frontal bone, would indicate otherwise. They are both nearly entire.

9, 10, 11, 12. Finely finished pipes of red catlinite and found in the mounds; the bird pipe on the left is in the collection of Shurtleff college, and was found on the Gillham farm below Wood river. No. 12 is remarkable as showing a sort of beard on the side of the face. It is of stone and found with the pottery.

14, 15, 16. Stone images. Probably used in religious or other important ceremonies. In each there are two funnel-shaped cavities in the back and posterior portions that have led some to believe they might have been used as pipes on great occasions. No. 16 is a splendid specimen of stone carving, and was found in a small mound on the Piasa creek, near the north-line corner of Madison county. It stands about (8) inches high and is cut from a single block of hard, red catlinite, or Minnesota pipe stone. The original is now the property of Blackburn University.

No. 14 is also of red catlinite, of fine workmanship, and exhibits a hideous human form with a fish protruding from the wide open mouth, with another fish held in the hands between the knees. We also took this from a small mound on the banks of the Mississippi, near the mouth of the Illinois. No. 16 is also of red catlinite, and was found by some laborers making a new highway or public road, not far from the great Cahokia Mound. It was broken into several pieces by the plow, and the head is wanting. We obtained the original from the Missouri Historical Society, and made the restoration as given in the cut. The original was made from a single block of stone, very neatly carved and highly polished.

The builders of the Cahokia mounds, from the relic left behind, seem to have been of a peaceful character rather than warriors. Some of the finest implements



of stone from this vicinity are implements of agriculture. Hoes not very unlike in shape to those of iron in present use, were made of flint, and with such skill as to be very serviceable tools. Spades and digging tools of flint also, and we have several fine implements that are worn in such manner and of such peculiar shape as to indicate that they were fastened to a stock and pulled through the soil after the manner of a plow. Some of these implements of agriculture, doubtless used in the cultivation of corn, are among the most valued of the relics of the stone age.

We have no evidence that this people had any knowledge of metals, except, copper. They used both iron and lead ores as a stone, and both these ores are frequently found in their mounds. The age corresponding to that of bronze in Europe was a copper age on the Mississippi. Our mound-builders knew nothing of tin. Copper ornaments were not uncommon (see illustrations) here, and were made by beating out pieces of native copper, obtained apparently from the region of Lake Superior, where the mines were worked quite extensively.

The domain of this people must have been of great extent or their commercial relations extended very widely, for we find side by side copper from Superior, plumbago and mica from the East, obsidian from Mexico or the west, and shells from the Atlantic coast.

What became of the mound-builders is not known; living as they did in communities about the alluvial lands of the rivers and streams, they were no doubt subject to epidemics and plagues, and thus were either destroyed or so weakened as to fall a prey to the nomadic tribes whom we now know as their successors. Even

"Lo! the poor savage whose untutored mind."

bears no record in history to tell whence he came.

There is still another class of antiquities in Madison county, found in the caverns and cave shelters along the rocky bluffs above Alton.

The aborigines, such as we see in the red Indian, it is well known seldom used a cavern, or even entered one, having a superstitious fear of such places; still it is quite probable that they were sometimes driven by storms or otherwise to accept such shelters. Notwithstanding these facts in regard to the habits of the red men, the caves and cave shelters about the bluffs show numerous evidences of occupation in times past. Accumulations of ashes in these caves are not uncommon, showing that for long periods these places were inhabited by savage men, who lived on the flesh of animals, and also of the unsavory shell fish



found along the shore of the Mississippi. Large accumulations of the shells of the Unio and other shell fish are found near these old cavernous abodes.

Nor are the indications entirely wanting that they did not sometimes partake of human flesh and were cannibals. In several of the caves about the Piasa, and in the vicinity of the mouth of the Illinois river, we have found among the debris of these cave dwellings human bones that had been broken lengthwise, apparently to extract the marrow. Farther up on the Illinois river, Judge Henderson and others have found similar evidences of apparent cannibalism.

The implements left by these cave dwellers are very rude. We have some beads made of stalactite, as well as a few rude implements of the same material. As these cavernous retreats have not been thoroughly explored, much interesting information may be derived from this source.

To sum up the ethnology of Madison county it would seem that there are to be found many traces of men of whom we know but little, except that they were the merest savages, living almost like the wild beasts with whom they fiercely disputed for dominion.

Then comes a class of earthen mounds that seem very old, but which contain little or nothing to furnish data for any history whatever.

Then there suddenly seems to intrude a class of earthen mounds, some of which are of huge dimensions. These people seemed to have a systematic government and religion, and to have followed agricultural pursuits. They seemed to have passed the pale of savagery, and advanced to some of the higher planes of barbarism. They lived in great communities, generally occupying the low lands which they cultivated. The fact that these people had so many customs, and singular ceremonies, almost exactly like the barbarous nations of the old world, would indicate that there was a remote period of contact, and that the commencement of civilization may have had a common origin or started from a common centre.

Solon's story of Atlantis as told by Plato and learned by Solon of the Egyptian priests is the only theory, in our opinion, that explains the wonderful similarity of the custom as exhibited all over the world. Solon's story was that at one time a vast island, or rather a continent in extent, existed in what is now the ocean, and connected Europe, Asia, Africa and America.

This great island was two thousand miles long and one thousand miles wide. It was densely populated, and the centre of all civilization, which spread from here through commercial relations. In one awful day this great Empire sank beneath the sea, and the surrounding continents kept not only a tradition of the great catastrophe as a flood, but retained many of the customs learned from them.



Whether our great mound builders were a colony from Atlantis and founded an empire on the Mississippi, we are hardly prepared to prove.

They disappeared, and the latter Indians, a large portion of whom are romantic, succeeded them; from where, how, when, are questions we cannot answer, but we are diligently gathering together as story a leaf here and there, that are cast up like empty shells on the shores of time.











